

THE ARMY'S PERSONNEL TRANSFORMATION

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Introduction

Within the past 18 months, Army personnel and human resource (HR) leaders worldwide reached consensus on a broadly stated concept of support for the personnel system of the future. The vision for personnel transformation is to create a personnel system that is simple, accurate, and accessible. The new concept of personnel support operates in a knowledge-based environment where everyone is responsible for knowing more than ever before. Thus, information must be readily accessible, regardless of the source.

In this environment, the personnel community will provide simple Web-enabled applications to the customer, as well as ready, relevant information to the commander, while integrating the complex processes in the “back end”—or sanctuary—away from the customer. This concept of personnel and human resource support calls for Web-enabling the initial and interim forces along a path that matches the Army transformation and envisions a fully Web-based objective force. Key to achieving the future vision of Army personnel support is a single, integrated (multicomponent) HR database, referred to as the Integrated Total Army Personnel Database (ITAPDB). Also vitally important to the success of this concept is the redesign of more than 1,170 personnel tasks and functions required to support soldiers, commanders, and family members.

Cold-War mentality and a paper-laden Army characterize our current

practices. We must determine what makes sense for both commanders and soldiers across the Active and Reserve components and re-engineer our business practices accordingly. Compatible with both the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System and current logistics modernization initiatives, this new concept of personnel support includes the full collaboration of the U.S. Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. We will ensure that what is required of commanders and soldiers is simple (in the battlespace, or “front end”) while personnel managers integrate the complex (in the sanctuary).

Systems Architecture

Our ability to deliver this vision of Army human resource support is dependent on a thin client-server system that integrates existing legacy systems, migrates current data to a central database, and makes maximum use of Web-enabled applications. The HR architecture will include three basic parts: the data-

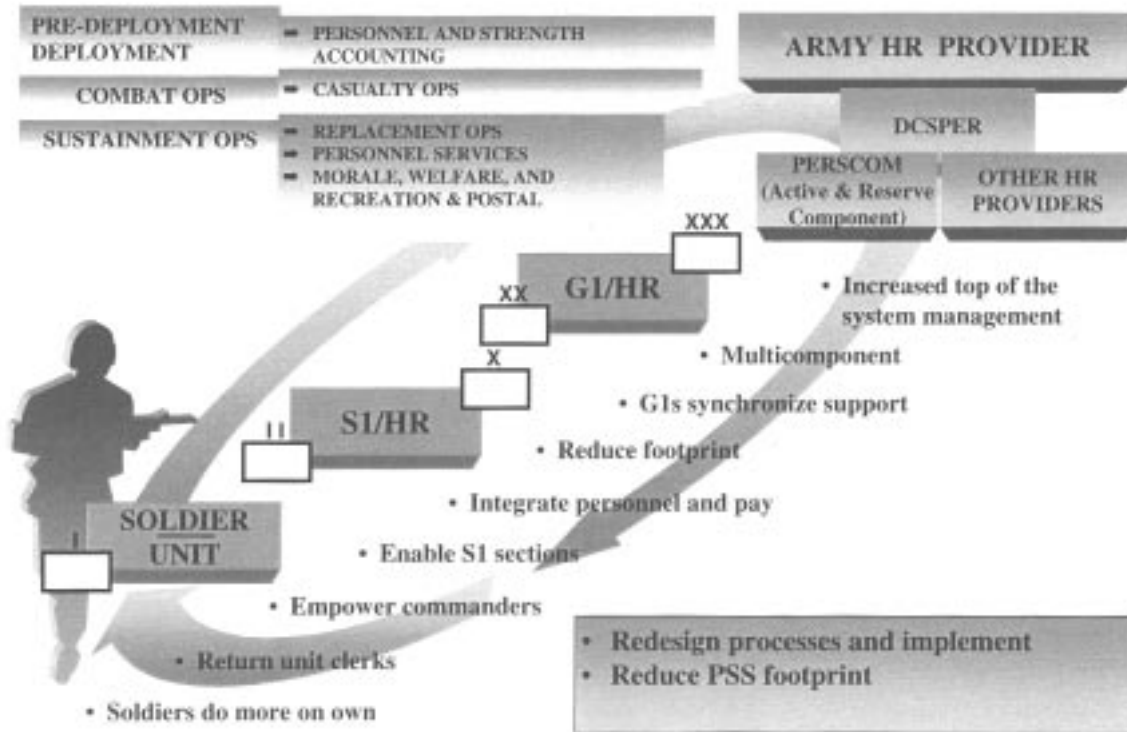
base, software applications, and hardware, supported by three vital enablers—public key infrastructure (PKI), bandwidth, and the World Wide Web—to ensure secure, quick, and ready access.

The U.S. Total Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) is well on its way to developing a virtual ITAPDB, or corporate personnel database, and demonstrated a proof of concept in November 2000. Though full funding for the ITAPDB remains uncertain, we continue to move forward, confident that this mission-critical requirement will compete successfully with other Army priorities. PERSCOM plans to have a fully functional ITAPDB in place in October 2002, a milestone critical to supporting the initial brigades of the interim force. When fully functional, the ITAPDB will provide the Army and DOD a corporate Army database that reaches all components, provides commanders and staff officers at all levels a single view of Army personnel readiness, and meets requirements for customized personnel information.

We must take advantage of existing Web-enabled technology and use commercial-off-the-shelf products whenever possible. Our vision demands software that will allow soldiers to access their official files from any location, allow commanders to access soldier information from any location, and allow personnel managers to see the same picture at the bottom, middle, and top of the system from their location. Accurate information, anytime, anywhere, and to anyone who needs it is essential.

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Supporting The Warfight, Tomorrow



The future Army is where the business world is today. Commanders and personnel leaders require personal digital assistants to manage and operate. Quality hardened laptops should be the device of choice in a field environment, with desktop stations in the office. Our equipment must be like our software—reliable, relevant, and off-the-shelf. To provide this level of personnel support, there must be a long-range plan that provides for hardware as well as software upgrades.

Important Components

There are three important components to ensure that we have access to the necessary information: security, bandwidth, and the World Wide Web. Without these three “access enablers,” our secure, routine, and ready-access vision will not work. Relative to security, DOD has mandated PKI protection of critical Service information architecture and has spearheaded development of a common access card (CAC). Even if

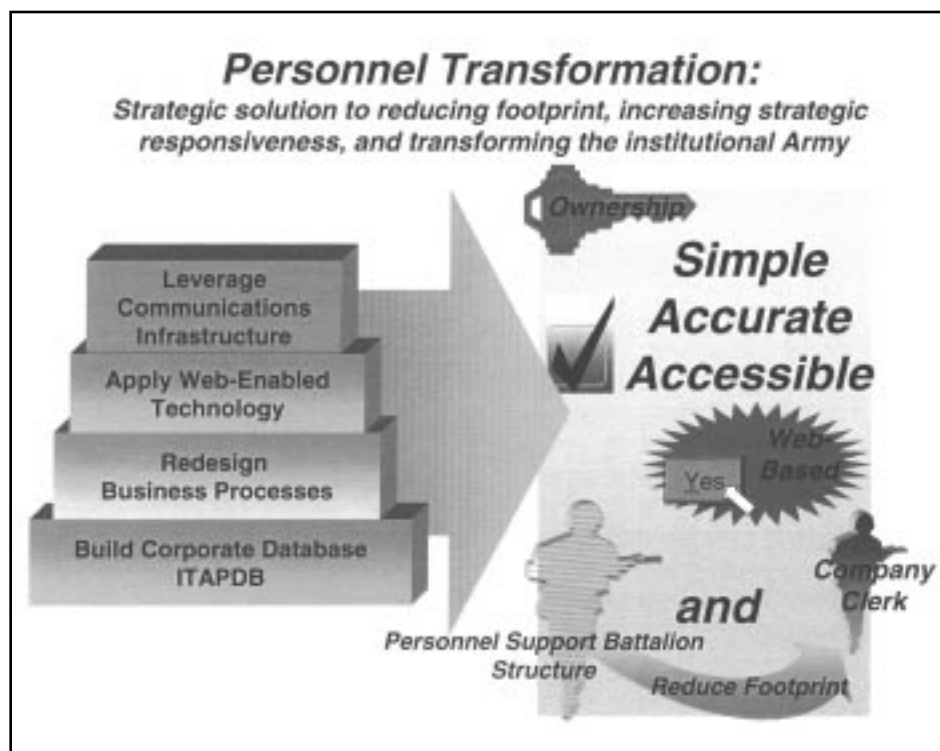
this were not so, Army human resource information systems designed to support the objective force would ultimately require PKI protection. Without it, we cannot use the digital signature. PKI protection encompasses information assurance measures taken to ensure viability of vital Web-based applications and warranty system access. Using the CAC as the Army PKI token, the objective system will ensure only authorized users gain database access, while protecting highly sensitive personnel support applications such as casualty reports, evaluations, promotions, and separation actions.

Very little needs to be said about the World Wide Web. It has permeated nearly every aspect of American life over the last 10 years. However, the future personnel Service support (PSS) concept does not ignore the current constraint imposed by bandwidth. Personnel planners remain convinced that personnel support to tactical commanders and institutional components of the Army will

compete well with other claimants for limited bandwidth. Taking care of soldiers remains among any commander's top priorities. Every effort is being made to highlight human resource bandwidth requirements in the formulation of global combat Service support Army requirement-generation processes.

Relevant Support

Once we redesign our business processes and apply Web-enabled technologies, we can begin to provide relevant and timely information to the commander and better service to the soldier. We will be able to perform the necessary personnel accounting and casualty management in the battlespace. All other support will be performed through “reachback” to the intermediate staging base and CONUS. The battalion S1 will be able to submit accurate and complete casualty reports, evaluations, and awards to the Department of the Army. Commanders will be able to design their own management



reports and have the same access to quality information as the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER). Using the World Wide Web, soldiers will be able to view their official military files similar to the way people view their personal bank accounts. We will accomplish all of this with reduced soldier presence in the battlespace, while simultaneously providing more responsive support. In a virtual support architecture, a few experienced personnel leaders at the right echelons of command, who have the right access to data, information, and knowledge, are all that will be required to support the warfighting commander and the force provider.

Redesign Efforts

While we design the systems architecture, we must also re-engineer our business processes. These redesign efforts are hard work and require closely coordinated efforts among the functional, systems, and field experts. Similar to the way that industry successfully tracks millions of packages globally using current Web technology, we must re-engineer labor-intensive processes such as strength accounting to make

them as simple and reliable as overnight delivery service. On the heels of such innovation, we must also have a structure plan that contains the personnel manpower requirements at each level. We must review the skills and specialties of enlisted, officer, and civilian personnel to determine what the personnel expert of the future must know and be capable of doing.

We must take into consideration extensive contracting efforts at the Army Training and Doctrine Command to include their outsourcing efforts and the best use of our civilian workforce. We must re-examine our structure and determine whether we can resource the company clerk—putting back a capability where the responsibility lies. (The company commander—not the battalion personnel and administration center—is responsible for his or her people.) We will determine what additional skills and expertise are required by those who operate in the knowledge-based personnel community of 2015. Certainly, there will be little transactional business, greater demands for information, and a need for personnel experts who thoroughly understand and can competently advise

commanders on personnel programs and policies, and their impact.

Costs

Our vision requires start-up dollars to develop a quality, integrated, and multicomponent personnel database; re-engineer business processes; and apply Web-enabled applications. Every day that we choose not to invest in the future, we are paying for existing legacy systems that are costly, antiquated, and difficult to maintain. Our vision will require us to make hard choices about current investments to fund our start-up efforts in this dollar-constrained environment. Our strategy requires us to produce the documented concept and systems architecture so that the Army human resource system will be recognized and can compete as a fully resourced Army modernization program just like any other weapons system platform.

Conclusion

Responsive, deployable-agile, versatile, lethal-survivable, and sustainable are the essential force characteristics of the objective force. The Web-based personnel support concept we have described supports each of the characteristics of the objective force. The future personnel support concept lessens the burden of PSS organizations and manpower on strategic lift and sustainment requirements. Concurrently, the new design and concept of support will not only simplify the current complex delivery systems of support and improve access to information for commanders and soldiers, but will also offer quantum improvements in the overall quality of human resource support to soldiers and families. We have a singularly unique opportunity in peacetime to revolutionize personnel support to commanders and service to soldiers. We must get it right.

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